

Warriors keep on winning

North Douglas softball rolling through season with no end in sight

By Zach Silva
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From the start of the season, the North Douglas softball team has had a target on its back.

"Everybody is gunning for us," said head coach Jesse Rice at the start of the season. "It definitely puts pressure on you, definitely puts pressure on the girls. But this group, they handle that pressure pretty well, they really do."

So far this season, the Warriors have done just that as they are currently 10-1 on the season, ranked number four by the OSAA and second in the coaches' poll. The lone loss on the season came in a 4-3 defeat at the hands of third-ranked Union/Cove.

It is by no means a surprise that the Warriors are the focus of teams around the state as they have made it at least to the state quarterfinals for the past five seasons. After losing to eventual champion Kennedy in last year's quarterfinals, the team is back again with top talent including state-winning pitcher Nicki Derrick who was out last season with an ACL injury.

"We know that we're a high level team to other teams so we know we're going to get their best shot day in and day out," said Derrick at the start of the year. "So we're kind of prepared for that but our mentality is kind of one game at a time, everybody is equal."

Through the first 11 games this year, the Warriors have outscored their opponents 115-14. Most recently, North Douglas defeated Yoncalla/Elkton 26-1 last Tuesday on the road. While all score lines may not be as lopsided going forward, the Warriors have only a couple teams in league, Special District 3, that have a chance to give it any trouble.

At the top of the list is fifth-ranked Central Linn. The Cobras have just one loss on the year and have scored the most runs in all of 1A/2A softball. The next team up is Oakland at 7-1. The Oakers are the only other team in the 10-team league with a winning record. What this means for the Warriors is that in the final 15 games of the season, the team will have just four games against teams with a winning record.

This week, North Douglas has a full slate of games as they faced Riddle at home on Monday, a double-header with Days Creek on Tuesday (all of which came after *The Sentinel's* press deadline) and two more games against Oakridge on Wednesday.

Lions start Sky-Em season with split



Cottage Grove junior Hunter Sharkey delivers a pitch in a road loss at Elmira on Friday. PHOTO BY ZACH SILVA/CG SENTINEL

Cottage Grove opens up league play with win against Marshfield, loss at Elmira

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With the bases loaded, two outs and an 0-2 count against 10th ranked Elmira, Friday's baseball game for Cottage Grove took a turn. The visiting Lions (4-7, 1-1 Sky-Em) held a three-run lead at this pivotal moment in the fifth inning and were ready to head to the dugout when a shot to deep right field from Ayden Wolgamott swung the game in favor of the Falcons (8-2, 2-2).

"We were a strike away. To be honest, they had their leadoff hitter up and I thought, I really thought, the way today is going, we're going to get out of this," said Cottage Grove head coach Dan Geiszler. "And when he hit the ball, I thought, 'We got it.'"

They didn't get it as Wolgamott's double brought in

three runs to tie the game. The Falcons went on to score four more runs in the inning to take a lead they would never relinquish as it locked in a 12-7 victory.

During the pivotal fifth inning, Elmira recorded five of their nine hits in the game and capitalized on errors from Cottage Grove – passed balls, dropped pop-ups, walks – that seemed to build on one another.

"Absolutely that happens. There's no other sport that that happens more in," said Geiszler of the team's mistakes. "Little tiny things just kind of compound and compound and then they've scored seven runs. It just keeps going and it's hard to stop sometimes."

While the Lions saw their errors as adding up, Elmira saw it as their hitters finding their swing.

"Sometimes that's how it's been, the bats just explode and we get a bunch of runs. That's kind of what happened in this game. They snowball," said Elmira's head coach

Ryan Wolgamott. "It's been that way, it's been contagious sometimes. We'll go three, four innings without scoring a run and then all of a sudden our bats will explode and we'll score five and then six the next inning."

The Lions were able to threaten once more in the game with the bases loaded in the seventh inning. A strikeout and a fly ball saw the end of the rally and the game.

Earlier in the game, Cottage Grove's Paul Logan got the scoring started in the third inning after some infield errors from Elmira. Wyatt Sayles, who had two hits on the day, also scored in the inning for Cottage Grove.

Elmira responded with four runs of their own in the third inning to take the lead before the Lions scored four in the fourth and one in the fifth. In the fourth, it was Cottage Grove's Walker Humphreys tying the game with an out of the park two-run home run. Humphreys finished with two hits on the

day.

In addition to some timely hits, the Lions were able find ways to score by being aggressive on the base paths. Five different Cottage Grove baserunners recorded a steal.

"We do a good job of running the bases and a lot of what happens is you see their middle infielder worried about our guy at second and they're doing stuff and it

makes it a little more chaotic for the defense and that's kind of our goal," said Geiszler. "We don't have the biggest offensive team, we're not going to hit many home runs and drive people in. So we've got to run and do things to hopefully get the defense a little bit on edge and make them make mistakes is kind

LIONS see B2



Elmira's infielders watch as an overthrown ball goes to left field allowing Cottage Grove senior Koltin Britton to record a run. PHOTO BY ZACH SILVA/CG SENTINEL

Cottage Grove's Roberts heading home



Gary Roberts addresses the Cottage Grove football team in January announcing that he will no longer be head coach. Roberts announced last week that he will be leaving CGHS and will be going to work at Marshfield High School. PHOTO BY ZACH SILVA/CG SENTINEL

After 12 years at CGHS, Gary Roberts is going to Marshfield

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Cottage Grove High School's Gary Roberts – who for the last 12 years has served in various roles such as football coach, athletic director, assistant principal, dean of students and social studies teacher – is going back to Coos Bay. A Marshfield High School graduate, Roberts is leaving Cottage Grove and will be Marshfield's assistant principal starting next school year.

"It was a very tough decision for me, but the opportunity to move to where I grew up and spend more time with the family was too much to turn down," said Roberts in an email to the CGHS coaches on Thursday afternoon.

Roberts was approached for the position "a couple months ago" and as he started to explore it as an opportunity, it was just too good to pass up.

"Just being the assistant principal will provide me more time to be with my family. I won't be at school three nights a week until 9 o'clock," said Roberts sitting in his office at CGHS on Fri-

day morning. "And then, it's where I grew up; it's home. It's always been a special place for me. That was kind of the biggest thing behind the decision, a chance to go home. The chance to have more time to spend with my wife and my kids."

While he is leaving, Roberts noted that decision was made difficult because of the relationships he has built over the years.

"It's hard because I've been here for 12 years. The people that I work with here in the building, the teachers the coaches that I work with are great people and they do

ROBERTS see B3

Athlete of the Week



This week's athlete of the week is Cottage Grove's Mitchell Krokus. Competing against 33 teams at the Prefontaine Rotary Invitational, Krokus finished first in triple jump and second in long jump. To read more about the meet, turn to B3.



Cottage Grove junior Mitchell Krokus competes in the triple jump earlier this season. PHOTO BY ZACH SILVA/CG SENTINEL